

**End drilling moratorium, conduct off-shore lease sales, move forward with lease plan**

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The op-ed ran in the following places: [Pal-Item](#) ; [The Star Press](#) ; [Herald Bulletin](#) and [Journal Gazette](#)

High gas prices are hurting all Hoosiers. The average price of a gallon of gas in Indiana is approaching \$4, up \$1 compared to this time last year. The "pain at the pump" is real, and it has the potential to get even worse for Hoosiers with the summer travel season just around the corner.

It is long past time for this nation to implement an energy strategy that will reduce our dependence on foreign sources of oil. Especially with the ongoing unrest in the Middle East and North Africa, we cannot continue to rely on foreign countries for our energy needs.

Producing more of our own energy here at home will help to provide the United States with the independence it needs while creating jobs, providing a cleaner environment and strengthening national security.

As past chairman of the American Energy Solutions Group in Congress, I have consistently supported efforts to implement an "all-of-the-above" energy plan that includes more domestic exploration for oil and natural gas, the continuing development of clean coal technology, investments in renewable and alternative energy technologies and incentives to spur greater conservation among individuals and businesses.

Unfortunately, the president does not seem to share this view. Under his administration, there is a de facto moratorium on oil exploration in the Gulf of Mexico. The United States has a drilling ban off both coasts, on Alaska's continental shelf and in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

Yet, on his trip to South America last month, President Obama told Brazilian leaders that the United States would stand at the ready to assist the country of Brazil in helping develop its oil reserves, adding that when Brazil is "ready to start selling, we (the United States) want to be one of your best customers."

Committing the United States to even more foreign energy resources is not sound energy policy. America's oil, natural gas and coal resources are equivalent to 1.3 trillion barrels of oil, the largest proven reserves in the world. American energy is the solution to America's energy crisis.

Specifically, one way we can do so is by ending the Obama Administration's de facto drilling moratorium in the Gulf of Mexico. This would start to provide economic certainty by allowing employers and workers to get back on the job and open up more domestic supply.

In addition, for the first time since 1958 there will be no offshore lease sales in the Gulf of Mexico. To address this, I am advocating legislation that would require the administration to move forward promptly to conduct offshore lease sales in the Gulf and off the shore of Virginia that have been delayed or canceled.

Finally, I am advocating that the administration move forward with the 2012-2017 lease plan with energy production in areas containing the most oil and natural gas resources.

These measures, taken together with a broader push to utilize an "all-of-the-above" strategy for energy production right here at home, will increase our long-term prospects for growth. Hoosiers shouldn't have to pay \$4 for a gallon of gas. I will continue to push for domestic energy solutions that will create jobs, reduce costs, eliminate our dependence on foreign oil and grow our economy.